

Levels of Inquiry

When considering inquiry activities in schools, consider the experiences and skills of your students. There are four levels of inquiry (Callison).

Controlled

In a controlled inquiry, the teacher chooses the topic and identifies materials that students will use to address their questions. Students are often involved with specific exercises and activities to meet particular learning outcomes such as retelling stories, evaluating sources, or comparing approaches. Students often have a specific product such as a Venn diagram, paragraph, or poster.

Guided

In a guided inquiry, students have more flexibility in their resources and activities however they are expected to create a prescribed final product such as a report or presentation.

Modelled

In a modelled inquiry, students act as apprentice to a coach such as a teacher. Students have flexibility in terms of topic selection, process, and product. The teacher/coach and students work side-by-side engaging in meaningful work.

Free

In a free inquiry, students work independently. They explore meaningful questions, examine multiple perspectives, draw conclusions, and choose their own approach for information dissemination.

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